TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE VIEDALLION

SUMMER 2014





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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE MEDALLI

FEATURES

Designating Denton City Receives First Lady's Texas Treasures Award.

THC OUTREACH

Award-Winning Travel **Sweepstakes Victor** Traverses Texas Tropical Trail.





SUMMER 2014



ON THE COVER:

The 1840s Garcia House in the Roma Historic District. Photo by Andy Rhodes.

FAST FACTS

These numbers show the significant economic impact of the Texas Main Street Program.*



NEW JOBS created

NET NEW BUSINESSES



MILLION Reinvestment in downtowns and neighborhood districts

*2013 economic activity report

Denton, Designated

North Texas City Receives THC's First Lady's Texas Treasures Award

By Debbi Head THC Senior Communications Specialist

From 2000 to 2010, Denton's population boomed an astonishing 41 percent, from approximately 80,000 residents to 113.000. Fortunately.

its commitment to preservation has been just as robust.

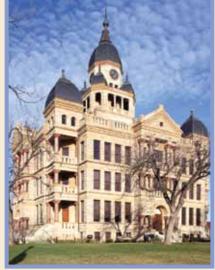
On May 28, Denton received the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 2014 First Lady's Texas Treasures Award, THC Executive **Director Mark** Wolfe presented the esteemed designation at the Denton County Courthouse, where he acknowledged the city's impressive historical resources. including the restored courthouse with its

original working clock, a Main Street National Register district boasting businesses in original buildings, and the exceptional Denton County African American Museum.

The award, initiated in 2009, recognizes communities dedicated to preservation via participation in THC initiatives and other state and local programs. The award is sponsored by the Office of the First Lady and the THC.

"Texas Treasures are communities that go the extra mile to discover their roots, teach living history lessons, and create a lasting legacy for future generations," said Texas First Lady Anita Perry. "This award recognizes visionary communities that put in the hard work required to ensure that their hometown is different from the

next. It spotlights communities that lovingly maintain their monuments from the past in order to create a stronger future."



From left: THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe, Denton Economic Development Program Administrator Julie Glover, and Denton Mayor Chris Watts at the award presentation. Right: Denton County Courthouse

Denton's multifaceted preservation commitment is evident through the dedication of numerous individuals and organizations, including the Denton County Historical Commission. the City of Denton's Community Development Division, the Denton Historic Landmark Commission, the Denton Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Downtown Task Force and Economic Development Board. Together with the City of Denton, they are active participants in projects such as the adaptive reuse of historic downtown buildings like the popular Jupiter House, loft residences, and the Campus Theatre, resulting in a boom in downtown residency.

Other preservation success stories include the identification of 17

historic iron bridges in the area, 12 of which have been relocated and are being reused rather than demolished; the Denton County School Outreach

Traveling Museum
Program, which
includes site visits
and in-house tours
for area students; the
Firefighters Museum,
which tells the story of
fires shaping Denton's
early history; and
four Historic Texas
Cemetery designations.

Denton is the 10th Texas city to receive the First Lady's Texas Treasures Award, now in its sixth year. The award promotes and recognizes the unique heritage experiences of Denton through special

signage and a video promoting the cultural resources of the community.

"I want to thank the First Lady for sponsoring this truly deserved award," said THC Chairman Matt Kreisle. "Texas Treasures communities represent a strong commitment to enriching the lives of visitors through the preservation of their real places telling the real stories of Texas. The efforts of the citizens of Denton should encourage other communities to follow on their own preservation journey."

To see video clips of the award-winning communities since 2009, visit www.thc.state.tx.us. To learn more about this and other community-heritage and preservation programs, contact the THC's Community Heritage Development Division at 512.463.6092.

Warming Up to the Cold War

THC's Military Sites Program Aims to Preserve Conflict's History

By William McWhorter Military Sites Program Coordinator

For some Texans, the Cold War may seem vague due to its lack of cohesive geographical boundaries. Regardless, its soldiers—Texas men and women, in particular—served with discernible distinction and resolute mettle on the home front.

sites, if collected and preserved, can lead to a better understanding of the Cold War's impact on Texas history.

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) began organizing related preservation efforts in June 2012, when Bonnie Eissler, oral history program

chair of the Hays County Historical Commission (CHC), requested the agency's assistance with initiating a countywide Cold War oral history project. This request ultimately led to a pilot oral history training workshop for the



THC Military Sites Program Coordinator William McWhorter (right) conducts an oral history interview with L.D. Cox for a previous project with World War II veterans.

The state of Texas is home to dozens of military installations and civilian facilities that had a direct connection to the Cold War, an unofficial, but all-tooreal "state of war" between the United States and the Soviet Union stemming from competing views of international developments from 1946-1991. In addition, the state has thousands of Cold Warriors' stories, from all branches of military service to civilian endeavors, which remain unrecorded and preserved. Their rich and abundant narratives of the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and Texas military

THC's Military Sites Program. Held at the Hays County Courthouse in San Marcos, the workshop drew CHC members, Texas State University graduate students, Cold War veterans, and other interested Texans.

"The workshop attendees provided some really valuable feedback about their interest in oral history techniques and how their communities were directly impacted," said Bratten Thomason, director of the THC's History Programs Division. "As you can imagine, for a conflict that ended just a few decades ago, many attendees had personal connections and came away

with a better understanding of Texas' historic context to this seminal event in our state and nation's history."

Thanks to the information gleaned from the Hays County workshop, the THC, with support from Texas preservationists and funding from Dallas' The Summerlee Foundation, launched an oral history training workshop series in August 2013 titled "When the Lone Star State Met the Iron Curtain: Recollections of Texas in the Cold War."

The THC provides the public with resources for those interested in preserving the legacy of a Cold Warrior candidate (home front or veteran) with an oral history interview. The Texas in the Cold War web page (www.thc. state.tx.us/texas-cold-war) offers links to THC oral history guidelines and information on oral history and Cold War programs across the state. The website also includes information about the THC's upcoming free regional training workshops (additional details below).

WORKSHOPS WORK

The THC's first oral history training workshop was held last summer in southern Taylor County near Lawn at a privately owned decommissioned 1960s-era U.S. Air Force Atlas F Missile Silo complex. To secure this one-of-a kind location, the agency's Military Sites Program collaborated with the Taylor CHC, the Texas Forts Trail Region, and site owner Larry Sanders. The workshop was a success, with nearly 60 attendees in an authentic Cold War environment learning about the context of the era. The series' second oral history training workshop was held in Grayson County





The THC participated in a tour of this Cold War-era fallout shelter in Rollingwood, an Austin suburb. The subterranean structure retains items from its 1960s time period.

in January 2014 at the Perrin Air Force Base Historical Museum. This venue also offered an appropriate context to explore an undertold part of Texas' Cold War history, as the museum chronicles the base's World War II to Cold War service, and its closure during the Vietnam War to help pay for the mounting war debt. Another Texas in the Cold War-related event was held in March 2014, when THC staff joined the City of Austin Parks Department for a tour of two Cold War-era fallout shelters.

The THC's oral history training workshops provide interview techniques and an engaging presentation on Texas' Cold War history with a localized focus. Workshop participants receive workbooks, hands-on training with digital voice recording equipment, practice with transcribing and editing, and document preservation.

Attendees also learn how to preserve their recordings at national repositories such as the Library of Congress or through Texas' Cold Warthemed programs, including Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center and Archive, and the University of Texas' Latino and Latina-themed Voces Oral History Project.

"Unfortunately, the number of workshops is limited due to funds raised to date," Thomason explained. "The good news is, the training they provide is slowly but surely creating a geographically dispersed pool of trained oral historians. They're coming away excited about recording and preserving local Cold War histories for their communities."

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

The Military Sites Program worked with the U.S. Army to secure the Fort Bliss Historical Museum for a workshop in El Paso on August 16, 2014. On September 13, the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, the Palo Pinto County Historical Commission, and the Texas Forts Trail have offered their assistance in serving as co-hosts for a workshop at Fort Wolters. Finally, the Nueces CHC has secured the Del Mar College in Corpus Christi; this site will provide an opportunity to discuss

Texas' extensive Cold War presence at naval air stations in Corpus Christi, Kingsville, Chase Field, and Naval Station Ingleside. Visit the THC's Texas in the Cold War web page for updates.

"It's extremely challenging for our single-staffed Military Sites Program to research, identify, evaluate, and conduct oral history interviews of all Cold War-era Texans," Thomason explained. "Fortunately, two successful oral history interviews were conducted at the onset of the program."

She notes that the program's first interview was conducted in December 2013 with veteran Pete Berkowitz (now chairman of the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission), who served at Fort Bliss from 1957–

59 in the U.S. Army's Office of Special Weapons Development. He also served as a NASA engineer on the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo space programs during the 1960s.

In March 2014, Military Sites Program staff conducted its second interview, with Cold War veteran Bill Haenn of the Berlin Brigade, who served in East Germany and led a U.S. Army detail that guarded the last Nazi World War II prisoner of war, Rudolph Hess, at Berlin's historic Spandau Prison.

To view excerpts from these and future oral history interviews, or to learn more about upcoming workshops, visit the THC's Texas in the Cold War web page. To make a donation to this significant program, please visit www.thcfriends.org/special-projects/texas-cold-war-oral-history-project or call 512.936.2189. **



The THC's first oral history training workshop was held in a decommissioned missile silo complex in Taylor County.



If you won a contest offering a free trip to the Texas heritage region of your choice, where would you go? Would you visit a familiar locale to enjoy your favorite sites? Or would you tour an undiscovered area to learn something new?

Jim Clark of Clarksville was recently faced with these questions. Randomly selected as the winner of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Time Travel Sweepstakes, Clark—a Texas history buff and descendant of Clarksville's founding family—chose the Texas Tropical Trail Region because he'd never explored the area.

The following travelogue details Clark's journey across South Texas in April with THC staff members Rob Hodges, the sweepstakes organizer and agency's social media coordinator, and Andy Rhodes, managing editor of *The Medallion*.

inside, we were cheerfully greeted by staff member Christian Johnston, who guided us through several relocated historic structures that played significant roles in Harlingen's history. The museum's 1923 Harlingen Hospital and 1850s Stagecoach Inn captured our attention with antiquated medical and farming equipment, but the highlight was touring the 1904 home of Lon C. Hill, the "father of Harlingen." We learned that Hill, who reportedly named the city for a friend's ancestral home in Harlingen, Holland, promoted influential irrigation and railroad projects on his 300,000-acre property, which he purchased in part from Henrietta King of the legendary

King Ranch.

From the museum, we traveled to the nearby Iwo Jima Memorial (956.421.9234, www.mma-tx.org) at the Marine Military Academy, Jim remarked on the monument's unexpectedly enormous size as we circled its granite base, etched with dozens of locations honoring Marine-assisted battles dating to the Revolutionary War. A mounted speaker box provided a brief

and tinny history of

the monument.

but colorful

details awaited

DAY ONE

Our historical journey began on a Thursday afternoon as we strolled beneath the Harlingen Arts and Heritage Museum's (956.216. 4901, www. mvharlingen. us) welcoming arched entryway. appropriately referencing the region's Spanish Colonial-inspired

architecture. Once

From the Rio Grande to King Ranch

Big History on Itinerary for Time Travel Sweepstakes Winner in Tropical Trail Region

Text and photos by Andy Rhodes, The Medallion Managing Editor

at the adjacent visitors center. Inside, we met a small group of Marine veterans sharing stories over coffee. Our guide informed us that the memorial outside was actually the original monument, but its plaster material was not suited for the volatile weather in Arlington, Virginia. It was eventually moved to Harlingen for the compatible climate and its connection to one of the Marines depicted in the

monument—Cpl. Harlon H. Block, a Rio Grande Valley native.

Afterward, we met with Harlingen Main Street Manager Cheryl LaBerge for dinner at La Playa restaurant, where we enjoyed a flavorful Tex-Mex meal of stuffed avocados with a generous side of live mariachi music. Jim mentioned that he gladly felt far away from Clarksville. We were off to a satisfying start.

DAY TWO

Friday began bright and early, with a 30-minute drive south to Brownsville for a full day of guided tours based on Jim's interest in exploring regional architecture.
Our first stop was the

Old Cameron County

Courthouse (956.544.0830, known locally as the Dancy Building for prominent Judge Oscar Dancy), a 1912 Classical Revival structure restored via the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Accompanying us throughout the day was Roberto J. Ruiz, a local architect specializing in historic preservation who organized the day's itinerary. Ruiz told us about overseeing the project's achievements and challenges while noting "it was absolutely fascinating to explore this building's adaptations and functions through the changing trends of each decade." Visual highlights included the ornate plaster detailing and magnificent stained-glass rotunda presiding atop the three-story building.

A block south, we visited the original **Cameron County Courthouse**, a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) that has served as a local **Masonic Lodge** since 1914. A few of us brave souls boarded the coffin-sized, 100-year-old elevator to ascend to the second-floor, a courtroom-turned-meeting space brimming with impressive ceremonial iconography. Lodge member Fabriel Cisneros invited us to

climb a wooden ladder to the rooftop, where we enjoyed lofty panoramic views of Brownsville and Matamoros, Mexico.

Afterward, we walked across the street to the National Register-listed **Immaculate Conception Cathedral** (956. 546.3178, www.immaculateconceptioncathedral.org), a magnificent 1859 Gothic Revival building currently being restored. Our guide was Calvin Walker, president of

Walker-Perez Associates **Architectural Services** and a consultant on the restoration. He pointed to the expansive sky-blue ceiling towering above us. noting that the smooth material was actually stretched canvas—a technique inspired by Mexican cathedrals of centuries past. Although the sanctuary was empty due to construction, the colorful stained glass and ornate light fixtures were a testament to the cathedral's intended service. Once again, we were invited to ascend steep steps to gain access to the roof area. Jim accepted the challenge, and squeezed onto a narrow ledge to gaze down onto the church's courtyard and surrounding

Kingsville (B) Hebbronville Gr Olmos Creek Falfurrias Sarita Port Mansfield Raymondville Roma **Rio Grande City** McAllen Donna Weslaco Harlingen Hidalgo Bahia **MEXICO** Brownsville

Opposite: The Iwo Jima Memorial in Harlingen. Above: The THC's Texas Tropical Trail Region brochure map shows the extensive territory covered during the sweepstakes tour (indicated by the purple line).

All our ladder climbing and sightseeing resulted in hearty appetites, so we took Calvin's suggestion to visit a historic downtown restaurant offering regional cuisine. With the Gulf of Mexico a mere 20 miles away, the 64-year-old **Oyster Bar**'s (956.542.9786) flavorful fried shrimp fit the bill in a down-home local establishment.

neighborhoods.

After lunch, we visited **Sabal Palm Sanctuary** (956.541.8034, www.sabalpalmsanctuary.org), where our tour began in the 1892 Queen Anne-style Rabb Plantation House (an RTHL) with University of Texas-Brownsville Professor Emeritus Larry Lof. Lof told us about overseeing the home's recent restoration project and the history of the surrounding 557-acre nature preserve, which protects a rare Sabal palm forest and contains nature trails, birding stations, and guided tours. He noted that original property owner Frank Rabb was an irrigation-system pioneer a century ago, when the nearby Rio Grande was one of the world's mightiest rivers.

"A truly unique thing about this location is its integration of history and biodiversity," Lof explained. "They complement each other well from a cultural perspective—

it's been a lot of fun to merge the two stories together for visitors."

From there, our group traveled to the **Brownsville Heritage Museum** (956.541.5560, www.brownsvillehistory.
org), located in the 1929 Southern Pacific Depot, a
magnificent Spanish Colonial Revival structure listed
in the National Register. As we walked among the museum's
insightful displays and photos related to the region's
history, Jim gazed upward and noted the depot's uniquely
colorful tilework and prominent arches.



Our final destination was the **Kraigher House** (525 Paredes Line Rd.), an architectural curiosity in the northern suburbs of Brownsville. It's the only residence in Texas designed by noted Modern architect Richard Neutra, and its minimal, clean-lined aesthetic was especially distinctive for Brownsville in the 1930s. It was named to the National Trust's and Preservation Texas' lists of Most Endangered Places (2004), and the City of Brownsville plans to continue recent restoration efforts for potential public use.

Above: The Old Cameron County Courthouse dates to 1912. Below, from left: Benjamin P. Varela and Celeste De Luna's artwork for the Harlingen Mural Project; the meeting room in Brownsville's 1914 Masonic Lodge; a statue in Brownsville's Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

That evening, our group returned to Harlingen for a top-notch Italian feast at Colletti's, located inside the 1925 **Reese Building** (202 S. 1st St.), a former hotel that became an adaptive reuse project. We topped the evening off with the **Harlingen Art Walk** (www.visitharlingentexas.com), a monthly event offering residents and visitors a leisurely way to enjoy local art in the historic Main Street district.

DAY THREE

Saturday's historical adventure got rolling at 8 a.m.—on Segways! Between the three of us, we had no experience on these stand-up, two-wheeled vehicles, but we were assured they were easy to operate (the devices' extra-wide tires to accommodate novice Winter Texans also put us at ease).

We met Brian Burton, co-owner of **SegValley Tours** (956.565.2404, www.segvalley.com), at the edge of Harlingen's downtown historic district for a quick overview of the contraptions. After practicing in a protected parking lot—the mechanics were easier than expected, with our feet controlling the "speed" (12 mph maximum)—we discovered the Segways were an effective and entertaining way to navigate around town. The smile on Jim's face revealed he was enjoying his new-found skill.

One of the highlights of our two-hour historical tour was the 1916 **Grimsell Seed Co.** (956.423.0370) Harlingen's longest-running company and a recent recipient of the THC's Texas Treasure Business Award. Grimsell's began as a major regional supplier of cotton, grain, and vegetable seeds, and it now offers gardeners a fascinating variety of plants, seeds, soils, and natural fertilizers.

By 11 a.m., we departed Harlingen making a quick stop at **La Mexicana Bakery** (956.421.3155) for *pan dulces* and headed west toward Rio Grande City, our home base for the next two nights. En route, we stopped in McAllen for an amazingly authentic Tex-Mex meal (featuring perfectly prepared tortillas and hearty cheese enchiladas) at the historic downtown **Rex Café** (956.686.9074), operated by the same family using the same recipes since 1947. After lunch, we visited Mission's National Register-listed







La Lomita Chapel (on FM 1016, three miles south of Hwy. 83, 956.580.8760), a profoundly serene site dating to 1899. We lingered a few extra moments to enjoy the gentle welcoming breeze and gleaming white walls.

That afternoon, we met with a delegation of city officials in **Roma** (956.849.1411, www. cityofroma.net), where Mayor Freddy Garcia impressed us with his historical knowledge of the community that traces its founding to 1765.



From left: Andy Rhodes, Jim Clark, and Rob Hodges rolled through historic downtown Harlingen on Segways with the help of SegValley Tours.

Tour highlights included a view of the National Register-listed 1928 suspension bridge, the world's only remaining international suspension bridge; the 1840s Leocadia Garcia House, the community's first general store now serving as the popular Casa del Rio events center; the 1884 Guerra Building, a former mercantile structure with magnificent wrought-iron detailing; and a spectacular view from the Roma Bluffs, which overlook the Rio Grande and Mexico's Ciudad Miguel Aleman.

"This historic downtown district is my favorite part of Roma," Garcia told us. "When it was originally platted, it was a very American city with a Main Street and important buildings all around it. The residents here with Mexican heritage didn't really want it that way. A traditional plaza was much more customary, so they just built a church right in the middle of everything and that became the plaza."

Below, from left: Harlingen's Grimsell Seed Co. opened in 1916; Roma's 1884 Guerra Building; Clark gazes across the Rio Grande from the Roma Bluffs.

As we walked through the Roma Historic District—a National Historic Landmark containing 38 buildings listed in the National Register—we felt transported to a historic Mexican village. Buildings and homes constructed a century ago retain fascinating details often lost to demolition and development in other parts of Texas. Intricate ironwork on balconies, carved designs in rugged wooden doors, and footthick sandstone walls

with colorful plastering reminded Jim he was far from Clarksville.

That evening, we returned to Rio Grande City, where we dined at **Casa de Adobe** (956.487.8216), located in the historic adobe home of noted educator and writer Florence Scott. Afterward, we settled in for the first of our two nights at **La Borde House** (956.487.5101, www.labordehouse.com), an 1898 National Register property built by French immigrant Francois LaBorde. Originally known as LaBorde Hotel, it features six guest rooms with period furnishings and plenty of historical charm, an appropriate amenity for our group of heritage travelers.

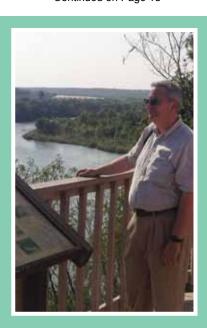
DAY FOUR

We hit the road at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday for our two-hour drive to the **King Ranch** (361.592.8055, www.king-ranch.com), a National Historic Landmark that Jim mentioned was on his "bucket list" of places to visit. En route to Kingsville, we made a brief detour in Falfurrias to visit the **Don Pedrito Jaramillo**

Continued on Page 13







Preservation Education

Meet the THC's Diversity Interns

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, The Medallion

For many Texas students, summer vacation means traveling with family to a cooler climate or a trip to the gulf coast. Others choose to relinquish this educational break through internships like the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Diversity Interns program.

Two college students, ToniAnn Trevino (attending graduate school at the University of Michigan) and Idali Reyes (an undergraduate student at the University of Texas-El Paso), were recently selected as the THC's Diversity Interns. Trevino will be working with the THC's Undertold Markers program, and Reyes will be assisting with the THC-affiliated Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission. They will both spend several months learning real-world lessons about jobs and projects in the field of preservation.

Both interns agreed to answer a series of questions about their interest in Texas history and their plans for the future.

The THC's Diversity Intern program was created to build interest in and awareness of historic preservation, specifically among students from underrepresented cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. The Diversity Internship program is funded solely by private gifts. To make a donation, please visit www. thcfriends.org/special-projects/thc-diversity-internship. For more information about the THC's paid and unpaid internship programs, visit www.thc.state.tx.us

Right: ToniAnn Trevino at the THC campus in Austin

IDALI REYES

Why did you decide to pursue this internship opportunity? I had been searching for an internship since the middle of my junior year; however, most of the options the school promoted were either exclusive for certain majors or didn't capture my interest. The (UTEP) History Department sent out a mass email with information about the internship and THC, so I decided to look more into it and discovered that most of the projects involved promoting conservation and education. Of course the Holocaust project is what really got me hooked, and I decided it would be an amazing experience if I applied and was selected.

How have your past experiences (school, work, volunteer activities, etc.) prepared you for interning with the agency? I've worked with different people since I've started college. Specifically, I think the work and research I've done these last two years and my time in the El Paso Holocaust Museum as a docent are what have prepared me the most. I've dealt with large groups of students from



Idali Reyes at the THC administrative offices

ages 12–18, and the skills I've learned from my methodology courses and my job as a peer leader have also helped me become more organized and a more efficient communicator.

What factors did you consider when choosing your major? I basically narrowed it down to what I

enjoyed learning and reading about, and figured that if I was going to dedicate four or more years to something it should be an area that I'm highly interested and passionate about. I also considered the flexibility of the major. For example, there are multiple careers one can have from majoring in history, such as being a teacher, lawyer, or journalist.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing during your internship this summer? I look forward to establishing long-lasting connections with everyone involved with the THC that will carry on after the internship. I'm also going to work hard to accomplish all of the work that the project demands and even go the extra mile.

Why is Texas an interesting place to pursue a career in a history-related field? This is probably the simplest question to answer because it all comes down to one thing (obviously): history. Texas is such a historical place, and the people who live here now are all somehow connected in the creation of this state.



There's a myriad of stories and events that originate from the time before it was colonized by the Spanish to the U.S.-Mexico War to the Civil War and the significant events that characterized the 20th century (Mexican Revolution and its connection to El Paso, the Civil Rights Movements, etc.).

How do you anticipate using your experience here in the future?

Since the project is geared toward education, I'll use my experience to educate my (future) students about the importance of tolerance, cultural awareness, and that anyone can make a difference—no matter how small—in the world (as seen in the resistance movements during World War II and those honored as The Righteous Among the Nations).

How do you like to spend your free time? These last few days have been rather busy, but when I actually have free time I like to spend it reading, watching movies, or playing video games. Karaoke is another thing I like to do with friends. Whether I'm any good is up to others, but it's so much fun!

TONIANN TREVINO

Why did you decide to pursue this internship opportunity with the

THC? After reading a number of books this year that considered the importance of public memory and historic preservation, I decided to pursue an internship with the THC because I felt passionately compelled to be a part of conserving Texas' diverse history. I believe that historic places are truly community assets and deeply meaningful for future generations to see. I am invested in preserving narratives of minorities in Texas due to my focus on Mexican American history, so I commend the THC for highlighting undertold stories and addressing historical gaps.

How have your past experiences (school, work, volunteer activities, etc.) prepared you for interning with the agency? As a second-year graduate student, I have cultivated extensive research experience in the Texas State Archives, San Antonio's City Archives, The Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, and Spanish-language sources. My proficiency with archival resources and databases lends itself to creating well-researched and thorough historical narratives. I hope to offer my perspectives to the THC's efforts to preserve Texas history, while also contributing though my active involvement in identifying and researching historical spaces that represent Mexican Americans in Texas.

What factors did you consider when choosing your major? I chose to pursue a doctorate in history because I enjoy working in archives and piecing together narratives from primary sources, especially when the documents give me an idea about how individuals actually experienced historical events. In another regard, I feel deeply responsible to the preservation of cultural and ethnic groups in Texas since these groups are often scarcely found in formal archival depositories.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing during your internship this summer? I look forward to learning from all the dedicated professionals at the THC and gaining an interdisciplinary perspective on historic preservation. I also see this internship as an opportunity to learn the process of placing markers from start to finish and maintaining the integrity of historic sites.

Why is Texas an interesting place to pursue a career in a history-related field? When studying Mexican American history, Texas is a fascinating place to examine because of its diverse cultural roots and international significance. Furthermore, Mexican Americans and other minorities are intimately tied to Texas, meaning the state can be used as a microcosm to examine larger national trends.

How do you anticipate using your experience at the THC in **the future?** I hope to use my experience at the THC to survey possible careers in historic preservation after I complete my degree. Even within the realm of academia, I feel a responsibility to be involved in public history and the preservation of the state's cultural resources. Moreover, my experience with THC will strengthen many of my methodological skills and interdisciplinary thinking, which would be a priceless contribution to my future scholarship.

How do you like to spend your free time? In the free time I do have, I love cooking, reading, and taking my dog to the park on days when it's nice outside. This summer, I have a reading list and a few recipes I hope to master. ★

Bridging Heritage

Preservation Partners Plan Summer Open Houses for Texas' Historic Bridges

By Linda Henderson THC Historian

When people think of Texas' historic bridges, they often picture metal truss structures built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Later bridges, such as those built after World War II, are now more than 50 years old, and many have their own historic significance. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has been working with the Texas Department of Transportation



The historic Pecos River Bridge near Comstock

(TxDOT) and the Historic Bridge Foundation (HBF) to determine which are the most significant; this summer, they are encouraging Texans to join the conversation.

The post-1945 bridges were a distinct departure from their earlier predecessors, largely due to widespread standardization in bridge design. Texas was a national leader in bridge design during this time, and its engineers led the country in the creation and use of new construction materials, bridge types, and fabrication techniques. As a result, innovative design advancements were the hallmarks of engineering during this post-World War II period.

Texas has approximately 15,000 bridges built between 1945 and 1965. Over the last several years, TxDOT researched these bridges, interviewed retired bridge engineers, and evaluated the structures for their National Register of Historic Places (NR) significance. TxDOT finalized NR eligibility determinations for these bridges, and

the THC and HBF concurred that more than 100 are eligible for listing in the NR for their historical and engineering significance.

As an additional part of this effort, TxDOT, THC, and HBF also worked to establish a treatment plan for these 100-plus historic bridges. This plan includes dividing the bridges into three groups based on their historic and/or engineering significance. This approach helps dictate the type of regulatory compliance and mitigation TxDOT would be required to complete if future projects result in adverse effects to the bridges.

This summer, TxDOT, in cooperation with the THC and HBF, will host a series of public open houses to discuss the results of the NR evaluations of bridges in Texas constructed after 1945. The events will also provide a public forum for gathering feedback about the proposed historic bridges treatment plan. Based on the public's feedback, the proposed

Texas' Historic Bridges

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

New Braunfels	July 29
Grapevine	August 5

Galveston August 14

hierarchical treatment approach may be applied to other types of bridges, such as metal truss bridges or Depressionera structures.

"Because these open houses will set the tone for our historic bridgeplanning efforts, we really hope for active public participation," said Bruce Jensen, TxDOT's cultural resources management branch director.

Kitty Henderson, executive director of HBF, added, "Historic bridges are an important part of the state's history. We hope people from across the state will join us in working with TxDOT and the THC to discuss the ways state agencies consider and manage Texas' historic bridges."

Detailed information about times and locations of the public workshops will be available at www.thc.state.tx.us. If you cannot attend, please visit the THC's website for more information on the post-1945 historic bridges and the proposed treatment plan, and provide your input on the proposed treatment approach.

For more information, contact the THC's Linda Henderson (512.463.5851 or linda.henderson @thc.state.tx.us) or TxDOT's environmental consultant Maryellen Russo (512.264.1095 or mrusso@ blantonassociates.com). *

Continued from Page 9

Shrine (361.325.2907), honoring a famous regional *curandero* (faith healer) from the late 1800s, and to see the restored 1914 **Brooks County Courthouse** (361.325.5604), designed by noted architect Alfred Giles.

Upon arriving at the ranch, we were greeted warmly by Toni Nagel, director of visitor services, and Marlett Bahn, our tour guide and a member of the Texas Tropical Trail Region board. Marlett set the stage for our half-day customized tour—a highly recommended option for all King Ranch visitors based on their specific interests—by describing the history of the property and Richard King, a pioneer in American ranching.

Marlett described King's admiration for the area's vaqueros and his recruitment of Mexican villagers who would become the renowned Kineño ranch hands. She also discussed the ranch's legendary Running W brand, which first appeared in the 1860s and has



King Ranch brand

been attributed to the shape of a longhorn's curving horns, a slithering rattlesnake, and the meandering Santa Gertrudis Creek.

"We like to give Mr. King credit for creating a brand that truly stands the test of time—it's recognized all over the world for quality and integrity," Marlett said.

Our five-hour tour included many memorable stops, including a visit to the ranch's former thoroughbred horse-racing headquarters, where Jim enjoyed learning about the operation's prime years (1920s-60s) and seeing the gravesite of its famous horse Assault, the only Texas-bred Triple Crown winner. Other highlights included tasting a sample of *nopales* (marinated cactus), visiting the weaving room's massive wall of international ranch brands, and spotting an abundance of wildlife (turkey, quail, and even a wild hog) at the ranch's watering holes.

Our final tour stops included the stately 1909 carriage house and a drive past the grand 1912 King mansion; a brief

From left: Clark receives gifts from the King Ranch's Toni Nagel (left) and Marlett Bahn. The commissary was used to thwart cattle thieves.

visit to the enormous feed lot (serving the ranch's 15,000 head of cattle); and a fun trip to the remarkable King Ranch Museum in Kingsville, featuring a 1949 custom-built Buick hunting car and a mesmerizing collection of large-scale Toni Frissel photos offering candid views of Kineños in the early 1940s.

DAY FIVE

Monday, our fifth and final day, got off to an early start with a historical **trolley tour of Rio Grande City** (956.487.3476, www. rgcedc.org), an attraction organized by the city's Main Street program providing a fun and educational service for visitors.

For the next two hours, we toured the city's impressive historic resources, including significant sites such as Fort Ringgold, which hosted Gen. Robert E. Lee in the mid-1800s and retains his namesake museum; the compelling Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, a 1928 replica of France's Grotto of Lourdes constructed of native rocks and petrified wood; and numerous historic downtown structures such as the 1886 De la Peña building, a former post office and pharmacy now listed in the National Register.

"This town used to be a thriving steamboat port back when the Rio Grande was a major transportation route," our guide Amintaa Reyna explained. "Now, the only thing we have to remind us of that era is our trolley, which we named Bessie after one of the boats that used to dock here."

By noon, our historical journey had come to an end. We agreed that our full-day itineraries packed with tours, discussions, and site visits resulted in a fascinating four-day history lesson about the rich culture of the Tropical Trail Region.

In fact, Jim summed it up perfectly when he said, "I accomplished exactly what I'd hoped—I now have a wonderful appreciation and understanding of this part of our state. I can't wait to come back to explore this region again."

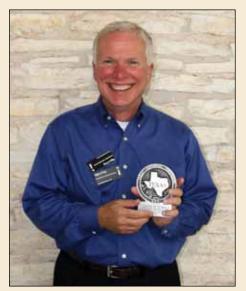
For those interested in visiting the region or creating their own custom-based itinerary, order a free copy of the THC's *Texas Tropical Trail Region* travel guide at www.texastimetravel.com. *

Rio Grande City's trolley tour visits historic Fort Ringgold.









THC Deputy Executive Director Terry Colley received a customized medallion at his retirement party.

THC Deputy Executive Director Retires

On May 30, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) bid a fond farewell to Deputy Executive Director Terry Colley. Colley retired after helping lead the agency for 24 years, including 15 as deputy executive director. Colley came to the THC from the Main Street Program, where he served as a manager for seven years in San Marcos, Muskogee (Oklahoma), and Grapevine.

"I've been honored to work with so many wonderful people across Texas who are truly dedicated to historic preservation," Colley said.

Colley leaves an enormous historical legacy in Texas, and his assistance as a friend, mentor, boss, and preservation expert will be sorely missed. We wish him safe travels and happy trails!



FRIENDS HOST EVENT IN DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH

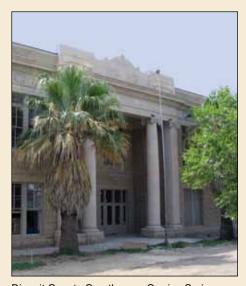
Pictured above, from left: Cara Kennemer, Robert G. Adams, and Leann Adams attended the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission's recent event at the historic W. T. Waggoner Building in downtown Fort Worth. The Friends organization thanks sponsors HRI Properties, Komatsu Architecture, and Stonehenge Capital Company, LLC for a wonderful evening celebrating historic preservation.

THC AWARDS ROUND VIII COURTHOUSE GRANTS

The THC announced Round VIII grant recipients of its nationally recognized Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program at its recent quarterly meeting in Fort Worth. Commissioners awarded matching grants to 18 Texas communities to help preserve their historic courthouses.

The communities to receive funds in Round VIII of the program are: Callahan, Dickens, Dimmit, Houston, Hunt, Jefferson, Karnes, Lamar, Lee, Limestone, Lipscomb, Lynn, Polk, Rains, San Saba, Upshur, Wilson, and the city of Hidalgo. The awards are all emergency grants totaling more than \$5.9 million that included funds held in reserve from the previous grant cycle.

The THC requested \$20 million for the Round VIII grant cycle, but was appropriated \$4.2 million by the 83rd Texas Legislature. While the significant reduction is a temporary setback for the 76 counties that currently qualify for additional funding, Round VIII emergency grants will address serious building deficiencies affecting usability, including flooding, fire and electrical hazards, and structural and safety issues.



Dimmit County Courthouse, Carrizo Springs

"The goal of this program is to assist as many communities as possible," said THC Architecture Division Director Sharon Fleming. "Counties receiving grants this round are in imminent danger of experiencing a catastrophic event, such as a fire, electrical hazard, or structural mishap that could cause injury or further endanger the building to the point where it is unusable."

For more information, contact the THC's Architecture Division at 512.463.6094 or visit www.thc. state.tx.us.

Make Your Mark

Change the Way You Promote Your Work

By Amy Hammons County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

When we started our outreach program in 2008, our aim was to stimulate every County Historical Commission (CHC) in Texas. We hoped that each county would have at least seven residents who would contribute time to preserving and protecting their historic resources.

However, in some places, finding people to participate was more difficult than we imagined. Fortunately, we learned a lot; and as a result, we changed the direction for outreach programmatic services.

Here are three important lessons we've learned:

- 1. CHC work is hard. It's rewarding and important, but not everyone is up to the challenge.
- 2. Rather than expanding existing programs, CHCs occasionally take on more projects without considering which efforts might be



In celebration of National Preservation Month, the Denton CHC presented certificates to county officials in recognition of their commitment and dedication to historic preservation in Denton County. Pictured are Denton County officials, staff, and CHC appointees.

more productive or meaningful than others.

3. Since CHC appointees are spread thin, all available resources are expended on projects and events, leaving little energy or time to cultivate support for the CHC. Developing ways to promote

CHC work as an investment in Texas' future is our greatest challenge.

In the coming months, CHCs will have the opportunity to address this challenge by increasing their perceived value with decision-makers in Texas. From submitting budget requests to meeting with community leaders, CHCs can present specific ways their efforts benefit the county and contribute to the character of our state.

CHC Outreach is responding to this challenge by highlighting the best of what CHCs accomplish.

We're using the THC's Facebook page and website to feature CHCs that change the way communities and elected officials value preservation.

Visit www.thc.state.tx.us and search for the term "game changers" to see how CHCs are developing new ways to influence others. *

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The Medallion is available online at www.thc.state.tx.us/medallion. If you would prefer to receive The Medallion electronically instead of through the mail, please send your name and address to thc@thc.state.tx.us. You will be notified by email when each new issue is available on the THC website and will no longer receive a printed copy.

Our Mission

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.



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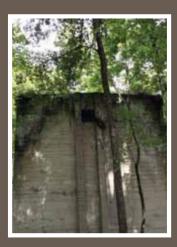
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WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

Know your Texas history? Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will receive a prize and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 or email to medallion@thc.state.tx.us.

Need a clue? The truss span used for this bridge was erected in 1896 over the Brazos River, but was relocated to its present site in 1940.



Answer to the photo from the last issue: The site pictured at left is an abandoned concrete structure at the Old Aldridge Sawmill in the Angelina National Forest. Several readers correctly identified the site, but the first to respond were Floyd Boyett of Lumberton, Jonathan Gerland of Diboll, and Mike Laverde of El Paso. Thanks to all who participated! *

